

REMARKS

This respond to the Office Action dated March 2, 2005 in which all pending claims have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over European Patent No. 0671589 to Hattori ("Hattori") in view of Japanese Patent No. 02-290270 ("JP 02-290270"). Claims 49-60 are pending in the present application. Claim 49 has been amended. Applicants respectfully submit that claims 49-60 are believed to be patentable over the prior art of record; therefore, withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

More specifically, with reference to Figs. 1 and 2 of the present application, a lighter in accordance with one embodiment comprises, *inter alia*, a gas reservoir 2 having a top wall 7 traversed with a well 9 for receiving a tubular element 19, which houses a gas dispensing device 10. The top wall 7 of the reservoir is provided with an annular groove 36. A reinforcing ring 37 is engaged in the annular groove 36, so that the annular wall 38 that separates the groove 36 from the well 9 is clamped between the ring 37 and the tubular element 19. Notably, this clamping provides sealing between the well 9 and the tubular element 19 merely by contact between these two parts, without requiring an additional gasket, such as an O-ring. (*See*, e.g., the specification at page 4, lines 28-34).

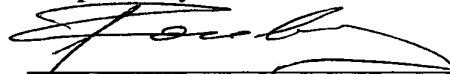
In contrast, the Hattori reference uses an O-ring to provide the necessary sealing. With reference to Fig. 8, Hattori discloses a lighter comprising a gas reservoir 1 having a top wall (not referenced), the top wall having an annular groove and annular wall (not referenced), a nozzle cylinder 5 passing through the top wall, an O-ring 7 surrounding nozzle cylinder 5, and a cap 8 that fits onto the O-ring 7 and into the annular groove. The Office Action asserts that "at least a portion of the annular wall is reinforced by the ring [cap] 8." The applicants respectfully submit that his assertion is incorrect, because it is not supported by the reference. In particular, Hattori discloses in column 2 lines 3-7 that "[a]n O-ring 7 is held in a position between the tank wall and the nozzle cylinder 5 by means of a cap 8 to prevent the fuel gas from leaking..." In other words, the O-ring 7 provides the sealing between the annular wall and nozzle cylinder 5, while the cap 8 is used merely to hold the O-ring 7 in place. The reference does not disclose, teach or suggest that cap 8 is engaged in a tight-fit manner in the annular groove to compress the annular wall so tightly as to provide sealing sufficient to prevent gas leaks, as recited in claim 49. Unlike in the present application, the sealing function in Hattori is performed solely by the O-ring 7, which is not placed in the annular groove but sits directly on the nozzle cylinder 5.

Accordingly, claim 49 and claims dependent thereon are believed to be patentable over the prior art of record, because the Hattori reference does not disclose a lighter having a fuel reservoir with top wall "being reinforced by a ring engaged in a tight-fit manner in the annular groove to compress the annular wall against said tubular element and to provide sealing between said well and said tubular element only by contact between the ring and the annular wall," as recited in amended claim 49 of the present application. Thus, allowance of independent claim 49, as well as claims dependent thereon, is respectfully requested.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and remarks. Should the Examiner have any questions regarding this matter, he is invited to call the undersigned at the phone number indicated below.

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Respectfully submitted,



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